

LEG Cmte-LJIC Comment

From: donotreply@mt.gov
Sent: Friday, May 6, 2022 11:45 AM
To: LEG Cmte-LJIC Comment
Subject: Public Comment for LJIC

Public Comments for the Law and Justice Interim Committee

Date: 6th May 2022 11:44

First Name:
Preston

Last Name:
Parish

Email Address:
pparish@montanabudget.org

Subject:
Public Comment to the Law and Justice Interim Committee on HJ 31

Comment:

RE: Public comment on HJ 31-1, HJ 31-2, HJ 31-3 Dear Chair and Members of the Committee, For its May 9th meeting, the Law and Justice Interim Committee has requested public comment on HJ 31 – interim study of criminal justice system data in Montana. The Montana Budget & Policy Center (MBPC) thanks the committee for the opportunity to comment on the proposals. MBPC is a nonprofit organization that provides in-depth research and analysis on tax, budget, and economic policies to promote opportunity and fairness for all Montanans. After assessing the three proposed draft bills, MBPC recommends that the committee move forward with draft HJ 31-1, modeled after Florida legislation. Florida has established a comprehensive standard operating procedure guide for its data transparency system and appears to be leading in the efforts of data transparency implementation. A centralized data repository would allow the state to manage and link data across separate state entities, enabling data-driven, cost-saving decision-making. Moving forward with this legislation would mean the state and other interested stakeholders could measure the effectiveness of criminal justice policy interventions, identify disparate impacts, and target policy responses in the future. HJ 31-2 and HJ 31-3 are not as advanced in implementation. HJ 31-3, modeled after Idaho legislation, would not require the state to collect the same robust set of data points as HJ 31-1, which could slow the access and transparency to getting the needed data for accurate decision-making. HJ 31-2, modeled after Arizona legislation, is much like the current HJ 31 study bill and would only extend the amount of time it takes to survey and collect data. The committee has heard from state agencies that a centralized data system has long been needed and would greatly help with efficiency and communications in our criminal justice data system. While implementing a centralized criminal justice data system may require significant funding, the future savings could greatly outweigh the initial startup costs. It's also worth noting that because our legislature only meets every odd year and this data system takes years to implement, we should begin the process now. Given the current options, MBPC strongly supports HJ 31-1. Thank you for your time and consideration on the matter. Sincerely, The Montana Budget & Policy Center

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